CHAPTER-III

CULTURAL MILIEU OF CINDU MADIGAS AND THEIR BHAGAVATAMS

Cindu Madiga is a sub-caste of the Madiga Community. Combining the Cindu and Madiga derives the name Cindu Madiga. Cindu as a suffix denote a group of Madigas who perform the cultural text of Madigas by a way of a dance form. *Cindu,* litarary means 'a vibrant step' [1] patterned in a stylistic expression, which looks like a dance, in which circular motions are created while dancing. The performance of Cindu Madigas includes typical dances with Cindu's accompanied by oral narrative presented in a theatrical form. Their performances are popularly known as Bhagavatams and Yakshaganams, which belong to the style of poetic narrative plays, centred on the episodes drawn from the epic tradition. Hence they are of theatrical presentations with full-fledged character roles and dialogue style narratives having all dyad attributes. Before going onto the details about Cindu Madigas and their Bhagavatams, it is imperative to know their caste composition and their status in the social system.

During pre-independence Indian era, the Madigas are considered as one of the out castes, living outside the pale of *varna* system. They are treated as *panchama varna* and hence untouchables.[2] Their social hierarchy is construed on the *varna* system. The Madigas along with their counterpart community known as Malas, live out side the main village habitation site.[3] Usually their settlements are formed as hamlets to the village and their services are rendered for certain works connected with purity and pollution. With respect to village, their chief profession is disposal of the dead carcasses etc. This being the case they developed occupation related to leather skinning, tanning, and manufacturing leather goods. They perform all the lowest kinds of service for the upper caste people, especially bearing burdens and working in leather.[4] They take charge of the Ox or buffalo as soon as it dies. They remove the skin and tan it and eat the loathsome carcasses, which make them specially dispised and render their touch polluting. Some of the skins are used for covering the rude drums that are largely used in the Hindu festivals, and *Jatras* celebrated in the honor of the village deities. Their musical instruments are called as *Tappetalu.* The caste men impress the Madigas into their service, not only to make-up the drums but also to beat them at their feasts. Their musical instrument is called as *tappeta.* The main duty of Madigas is curing and tanning of hides and the manufacture of crude leather articles, especially sandals, trappings for bullocks and large well

buckets used for irrigation. The process of tanning with lime and *tangedu {Cassia auriculata*) bark is rough and simple *(Tangedu* is said to be cut only by Madiga as other classes think beneath their dignity to do it).[6] As did their forefathers, so the Madigas do today. The quality of the skins they turnout is fair, and the state of the development of native leather trade compares very favourably with that of other trades such as blacksmith and carpentry. The Madiga sandals are strong, comfortable, some times highly ornamented. His manner of working and his tools are as simple as his life. He often gets paid in kind, a little fodder for his buffalo, so many measures of some cheap grain, perhaps a few vegetables etc. The Madigas are also attached to one or more families of peasants, and are entitled to take dead animals of their houses. The Madiga is paid in kind and he has to supply sandals for peasants, belts for the bulls, and all the necessaries of agriculture; and for these he has to find the requisite leather himself; but for the larger articles, such as water buckets, the master must find the leather. Their occupation is well defended by their oral tradition. It is interesting to know that almost all castes in sub-continent have a myth that tells about how the caste has come into existence and occupation to which they should cling. The caste, myths are considered as oral narratives given by gods and hence to be followed strictly without questioning them. In a way the social organization in terms of hierarchy is organised to protect each occupation and work in solidarity with each

other. For this reason *varna* system and *Jati* relationships are conceived as a strategic display of groupings for symbiotic existence. Every caste for this reason has its own relevance to the social system and without which the system cannot survive and end up in chaos. Though Madiga is considered as an out caste, they are still given the due place during certain occasions in fairs and festivals of the village. The caste myth therefore not only relegate occupation to be performed but also delegate status in a given social system with further more than what they actually enjoy in order to sub-serviently survive with in the social hierarchy.

According to the caste myth of the Madigas, they are distained to perform menial jobs in the village and undertake leather works as an occupation. This of course is given to them as part of the curse for polluting the sacred feast of the gods. The caste myth[6] of the Madigas, enumerate eighteen *Yuga's* (ages) unlike in the classicist version of four *Yugas.*

Jambavamuni is the ancestor of the Madigas and was born in *Athbhutha yuga,* which is the fourth of the eighteen *yugas.* In the ninth *yuga* known as *Bhinnaja Yuga,* the creator Parabramha intended to perform the marriage of Trimurthees. For this occasion, Parabramha created Pancha Bramhas to manufacture material required for the marriage. They are entrusted with a job of melting the mountains of gold, silver, bronze to make ornaments especially those used *[pusthy,*

mettelu, ornaments, vessels, etc.,] for wedlock occasion. The eldest of the Pancha Bramhas, Manu Bramha approached as per the directions of Parabrahma, *Jambavamuni* for a leather bagpipe to melt the mountains of gold, silver, and bronze. *Jambavamuni,* though willing to make a leather pipe for them, yet fallen in dilemma of how to procure leather without killing an animal. Then Parabrahma advised him to create from his right rib of Yugamuni. *Jambavamuni* killed Yugamuni and made a leathern pipe from his skin. Yugamuni while dying gave him a curse to become an out caste. When *Jambavamuni* pleaded that he is innocent and he is forced to kill him for sacred duty, Yugamuni then gave a remedy that his untouchability would last for five thousand years.[7] That is how the Posterity of *Jambavamuni* became untouchables. The Pancha Brahmas made all the required Paraphernalia of metals by using the leather pipe as fumace to melt the mountains. The marriage is performed with Pomp and glory. After the marriage Siva and Parvathi went to *vana vihara.* She got hurt in her thigh. She tore her thigh flesh and threw it on a cow dung. Chennaiah was born out of it. To feed him Parvathi created a divine cow namely "*Jamili kamadhenu (or) Jamili gangi govu*", the milk of the cow was so tasty; that Chennaiah thought even the flesh of the cow could be testier than the milk. Kamadhenu heard this and committed suicide in front of the hermitage of Siva. The *devatas* then tried to remove the carcass, but failed. Then they asked Chennaiah to go to

"Jambalapuri Patnam" and call *Jambavamuni* who being elder may give them an advice. He went and called *Jambavamuni* as "O tata maha digira" instead of calling *maha digira* he called *madigira*. Because he has *Visha Vaakku* (evil spell) in his tongue, *Jambavamuni* became Madiga and his Posterity became Madigas.[8] Thus the name, Madiga came in to existence because of a tongue twister.

During the freedom movement Gandhiji, fighting against untouchability named the untouchable communities as *harijans* (People of god) and tried to assimilate them into the caste order. In Andhra, Madiga and Mala are considered as Harijans. While Malas belong to the right-hand caste, the Madigas are considered as left hand caste. The Malas since directly participate in agriculture as labour; they came under right hand caste (*Kudivaram*). The Madigas are leather-working people they do not participate directly in food production process and hence they are considered as left hand caste *(Melvaram).* Between these two castes, apart from economic reason, a mythological reason is also gives to destine them to be so.

The Madigas are also call themselves as Jambavas and claim to be descended from Jambu or Adi-Jambuvadu who perhaps the Jambavantudu of the Ramayana.[9] Edgar Thurston recorded that some Madigas, called *Sindhuvallu,* go about acting scenes from the Mahabharatha and Ramayana or the story of Ankalamma.[10] They also

assert that they fell to their present low position as the result of a curse and tell the following story.

Kamadhenu, the sacred cow of the *puranas,* was yielding plenty of milk, which the *Devatas* alone used. Vellamanu, a Madiga boy was anxious to taste the milk, but was advised by Adi-Jambuvadu to abstain from it. He however secured some by stealth and thought that the flesh would be sweeter still. Learning this, *Kamadhenu* died. The *Devatas* cut its carcass into four parts, of which they gave one to Adi-Jambavudu. But they wanted the cow brought back to life, and each brought his share of it for the purpose of reconstruction. But Vellamanu had cut a bit of the flesh, boiled it, and breathed on it, so that, when the animal was recalled to life, its chin sank, as the flesh thereof had been defiled. This led to the sinking of the Madigas in the social scale.[11]

The following variants of this myth are given in the *Mysore Census Report, 1891*. "At a remote period, Jambava *rishi,* a sage, was one day questioned by *Ishwara* (Siva) why the former was habitually late at the Divine Court. The *rishi* replied that he had personally to attend to the wants of his children every day, which consequently made his attendance late: whereupon *Ishvara,* pitying the children gave the ***rishi*** a cow (Kamadhenu), which instantaneously supplied their every want. Once upon a time while Jambava was absent at *Ishvara's* court another *rishi* named Sankya visited Jambava's hermitage, where his

son Yugamuni hospitably entertained him. While taking his meals, the cream that had been served was savory that the guest tried to induce Jambava's son Yugamuni to kill the cow and eat her flesh; and in spite of the tetter's refusal, Sankya killed the animal, and prevailed upon the others to partake of the meat. On his return from Iswara's court Jambava found the inmates of his hermitage eating the sacred cow's beef and took both Sankya and Yugamuni over to Iswara's court for judgement. Instead of entering the two offenders remained outside, Sankya *rishi* standing on the right side and Yugamuni on the left of the doorway. Ishwara seems to have cursed them to become Chandalas or outcastes. Hence, Sankya's descendants are from his having stood on the right side designated right hand caste or Holayas (or malas); while those who sprang from Yugamuni and his wife Matangi are called left-hand caste or Madigas". The occupation of the latter is said also to be found on the belief that by making shoes for people the sin their ancestor had committed by cow killing would be expiated.[12]

Thus the belief of the Madiga is that the gods to be out caste and to remain as left-hand caste curse them. However, this deplorable status is negated in order to console themselves, another myth floated to overcome this reality of isolation from the rest of the social order is created by them. According to this they are the children of the Matangi who is another version of Kali. Therefore Matangi is worshipped as

their diety. To tell how she became their diety, another myth is in vogue within the Madigas.

Jamadhagni Maharshi also known as Bagawan, on account of his godly power and virtues married Renuka, the daughter of Renu and had five sons by her. The youngest of whom was the famous Parasurama an incarnation of Vishnu. Once upon a time Renuka having gone to the *ganga* saw the king of the *gandharvas* wearing garlands of Lotus, to play with the *apsaras.* Having gone to the river to fetch water, she got some what attracted by Chitaratha, the king of the *gandharvas* who was playing with *apsaras.* She forgot the time of *Yagna* (Sacrifice). She realized the delay and afraid of the curse of the *muni,* she returned to the hermitage and placed the pitcher before the *muni* and remained standing with folded palms. The *muni* (Jamadhagni) came to know of the unchasteness of his wife, got enraged and ordered his son to kill her. Although thus directed, they did not do so. The said Parasu Rama, who was well aware of the powers of the *muni,* killed his mother along with his brothers. The son of Satyavati (Jamadhagni) was pleased and requested Parasu Rama to pray for any favour. Parasu Rama desired the reanimation of those killed. Immediately they got up as though after a deep sleep.[13]

The version locally prevalent is somewhat different.

Jamadhagni's hermitage was near the Kona, and he was worshipping the god Surabeswara, and doing *tapas* (Penance) there. One day his

wife Renuka Devi went very early in the morning to the river Gundlacama to bath and fetch water for her husband's sacrificial rites. She was accompanied as usual by a female slave of the Chuckler (leather worker) caste, as a sort of bodyguard and attendant. While she was bathing, the great worrier Karthavirarjuna with a thousand arms happened to fly across the sky on some business of his own and Renuka saw his form reflected in the water and was pleased with it in her mind. It must be mentioned that she never used to take any vessel with her to fetch water for her chastity was such that she had power to roll water into a pot-like shape, as if it were wax and thus bring it home. On that day however, she failed to affect this. She returned home empty handed. In the mean while her husband finding that his wife returned empty handed, learnt through his 'wisdom sight' what had happened and ordered his son Parusurama to slay his sinful mother. Parasurama went towards the river accordingly and seeing his mother returning, aimed an arrow at her, which severed her head from her body and also similarly severed with its unspent force the head of the Chukler woman who was coming immediately behind his mother. Parasurama returned to his father without even noticing this accident and when his father pleased with his prompt obedience offered him any boon. He prayed for the re-animation of his mother. Jamadhagni then gave him some holy water out of his vessel and told him to put together the dismembered parts and sprinkle some water over them.

Parasurama went off in great delight and haste and as it was still dark and early in the morning, he wrongly put his mothers head on the Chuckler women's trunk and sprinkled water on them. Then seeing another head and another body lying close by he thought that they belong to the female slave whom he had unwittingly killed and he put them also together and re-animated them. He was extremely vexed when he found out the mistake he had committed but as there was no rectifying them without another double murder, he produced the two women before his father and begged to be forgiven. The sage finally accepted the person with his late consorts other head as his wife and granted to the other woman the status of an inferior diety; in response to her prayers, and owing to her having his wife body. This was the origin of Matangi.[14]

The Matangi also recognized as Yellamma and worshiped. Since the myth, refer to Jamadhagni - Renuka story, she is also known as Renuka Yellamma. Thus, the caste myth of Madigas establish them as outcaste and assign them divisions within their own caste parallel to the *chaturvarna division.*

The Madigas like other castes do have endogamous sub-divisions:

Table No:1

List of Endogamous Sub-Divisions and their meanings:

Endogamous (Sub-Division)	**Meaning** (in English)
Gampa Dhomti	Basket offering
Chinna(or)Thel Dhomti	Tray or cup offering
Bhumi Dhompti	Earth offering
Chatla Dhompti	Winnowing basket offering
Sibbi Dhompti	Brass vessel offering
Chomdrappa Dhompti	Square space on the ground offering

Source: Edgar Thurston and K. Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes,* vol. IV, 1987, p.318

These sub-divisions are based on the way in which the members offer food etc., to their gods, a gampa dhompti places it in a basket, a Bhumi Dhompti on the floor. Each sub-division possesses many exogamous septs of which the following are examples.

Table :2

List Exogamous Septs and their meanings:

Exogamous Septs	Meaning (in English)
Belli	Silver
Chinthala	Tamarind
Chatla	Winnowing basket
Darala	Thread
Emme	Buffalo
Gavala	Cowry Shells
Golkonda	A town
Jalam	Slowness
Kamba	Post
Kappala	Frog
Kalahasti	A Town
Kaththe	Donkey
Kaththi	Knife
Kumbala	Cake
Kuncham	Tassel
Midathala	Locust
Mallela(or) Malli	Jasmine
Nanmuru	Four hundred
Pothula	Buffalo
Pasula	Cow
Ragi	Eleusine Coracana
Sikili	Groom
Thela	Scorpion

Source: Edgar Thurston and K.Rangachari. *Castes and Tribes,* vol.iv, 1987,p.318

The following table shows the sects of madigas as mentioned in their caste myth:

Table:3

Various sects in Madiga Community as per their caste myth:

Madiga sect	Ritual profesion	Native name
koya Madiga	Priestly Chantings	*Mantralu japenchevadu*
Sangari Madiga	Ritual drawings (Kolams)	*Patam Vesevadu*
Velpula Madiga	Camphor Litting	*Sambrani Vesevadu, Mangala Harathi echevadu*
Avuua Madiga	Ritual Possessing, Organising Groups in rituals	*Rangam Ekke Vallu, Utchavala Gumpunu Kramabadhikarinche vallu*
Kinnera/Byndla/Asadi/Jamukula Madiga	Players of Kinnera (or) Zamidika (string) Instrument	*Kinnera (or) Zamidika Vayedyalu Vaainche Vallu*
Kommu Madiga	Players of Kommu (wind Pipe) Instrument	*Kommu vaainche Vallu*
Cindu Madiga,	Ritual narrative tellers (through performances)	*Bhagavatam Adevaallu*
Masti Madiga	Acrobatics	*Dommari Vinyasalu Chesevallu*
Gondla Madiga	Ritual Leather BucketMakers	*Krathuvula bokkenalu chesevallu*
Landha madigaiga Daccali Madiga	Ritual Beggars	*Adukku Thinevallu*

Source: *Jambapuranam*.

The endogamous and exogamous divisions are taken note in matrimonials. Even purity and pollution is taken as one of the main factors in hierarchying exogamous groups. Food habbit become an important part of distinction for making these divisions.

The Madigas, like other caste people are much influenced by the belief system. Their belief system is manifested not only in fairs and festivals but also in their social organization. They have atleast five groups of bards who perform the creation myth as part of ritual offering.

The five groups are Cindu, Masti, Asadi (or) Byndla, Dakkali and Nukachanddyys. Each of community of bards narrate the caste myth from their own perspective and each adapt a style different from the others.

Table: 4

The variations in the performance of caste myth by different sects of madigas:

ard Name	ame of erofrmance	tyle of erformance	nstrument used n performance
indu	amba Puranam ellamma Vesam	emi theotrical haracter entry and xist. ibrant food steps rth Circular dance otion emi-theotrical	armonium abala alalu
asti	dipuranam	arrative oriented	addela abala armonium alalu
sadi/Byndla	oli Padalu/ oli Paatalu	arrative In this form out of 3 persons ain story narrator doing in ircular motion) arrative (story	amidika
akkali	atam Katha	elling to showing atams) ites only	innera
ukachandayys	ituals only		one

Source: *Jambapuranam .*

All the communities of bards' showen in the above table have exclusive right to perform their version of caste myth to the Madigas. The Cindu Madigas have a right to perform of the caste myth to the Madigas. The Madigas in turn have an obligation to watch/listen the performance of the caste myth from the bards. Otherwise it is considered as a curse and bad Oman to the Madigas. For having performed the narrative the bards are given remuneration in kind or cash or in both to Cindu Madiga.[15]

Apart from the duty of performing the caste myth to the Madigas, the bards possess the right to participate in the festivals, especially in the village Goddess festivals. They also have exclusive right to perform the role of the goddess Matangi or Yellamma to ward off evil from the village in the form of contagious diseases such as Small pox, Chiken pox etc. They also purify fields of the village during the rituals.

Cindu Madigas and Madigas : Patron --Client Relationship:

As stated above Cindu Madiga is a dependent caste on Madigas. They are dependant because of the fact that they have ritual right well established by the tradition with Madigas. Their chief occupation being ritual performance, they establish the relationship with the Madigas in which the Madiga belief system is created to share the resources through Patron and client relationships. In the feudal economy the economic compulsions are said to be the chief cause of tying up clients with Patron through land relationship.[16] The clients under this system

have an obligation to serve the patrons through the prescribed services. In India caste being the source of occupation the services need to be rendered to the patrons accordingly. In return the patrons also possess an obligation to reciprocate their clients by sharing the resources by cash and kind. Land being the chief resource under the feudal system, it is either the share of the crop that is produced in the land or a piece of land is given as *Inam* (gift) to the clients. Under the *jajmani* system, which is peculiar to Indian sub-continent, the whole village enters into a dialogical relationship in the process of exchanging goods and services.[17] In South India this system is known as *mirasidar* system.[18] The word mirasi comes from the route word merah, which means share. The portion of share, which is given to the clients, is called *mirasi* and who hold that right are called *mirasidar.*[19]

In the Patron and client relationship system of Madigas and Cindu Madigas, instead of economic compulsions, the ritual compulsions created through the belief system are vital for their social organization. One of the major reasons for this ritual compulsion is enunciated in their sacred texts, which are orally transmitted through the ages and kept the system intact and alive. According to ritual compulsions, the Cindu Madigas take the role of priest to perform certain purity-pollution rites through which the community feels secured from the evil forces and curses of the gods.

The Cindus have an exclusive right to perform the role of village goddess Matangi or Yellamma. The role performer is a female who dedicated her life to Yellamma and married her. She is known as *basavi* or *jogini.* Like in Sanskritic tradition wherein the girls are all dedicate to temple, known as *devadasis,* the *jogins* are also dedicated to the goddess. This system is popularly known as *basavi* system.[20] During the celebration of village festivals an unmarried Madiga woman called as Matangi abuses and spits upon the people assembled and they do not take this as an insult, because they think that her spittle removes the pollution. The women are indeed regarded as the incarnation of goddess herself.[21]

Similarly, the Pamba Madigas use very obscene language, when the god is taken in procession to the streets of the caste people.[22] The Matangi is an unmarried woman of Madiga class, chosen after a most trying ordeal, unless she happens to be descended from a previous Matangi to represent the goddess. She must indicate her fitness by suitable prophetic utterances and her nomination is not confirmed till she has obtained divine approval at the cult centre of Yellamma like that of in Balkampeta in Hyderabad.[23] When she has been finally confirmed in her honour she enjoys the previlage of adouring her face with a profussion of turmaric and saffron powder and carrying margosa (Melia Azadirachta) leaves around her. She is unmarried, but without being bound by a vow of celibacy. Her business is to preside at

purificatory ceremonies that preceed all festivities. When Mahankali or Poleramma or Ankamma or any other of the village dieties is to have her festival, the Matangi is approached to perform the rites. Her necklace of cowry (cyprecea moneta) shell is deposited in a well for three days,[24] before she is allowed to put it in the ceremony. She dons the necklace and marches behind the master of the ceremonies known as Poturaju, who carries a knife, wooden shoes and trident that have been similarly placed for a time at the bottom of a well.[25] The master of ceremonies, his male and female relations then stand in line and the Matangi runs round and round them, uttering what appear to be chantings, spitting upon all of them and touching them with her stick. Her touch and saliva are believed to purge all uncleanliness of body and soul, and are invited by men who would ordinarily scorn to approach her. She is allowed to come into the house. There she besmears a certain spot with cow-dung, and places upon it a basket. It is at once filled with cooked food. A layer of rice powder covers the surface of the food and on it is placed a small lamp, which is lighted. She then holds out a little earthernware pot and asks for toddy to fill it with. She moves quickly round the assembled men and women scattering upon them the water from the pot. The mistress of the house gives her the cloth she is wearing.[26]

The origin of the supremacy of Matangi is obscure and shrouded in legends. According to one of them, the head of Renuka, the wife of

the sage Bhrigu who was beheaded, fell in a Madiga house, and grew into Madiga women.[27] According to another legend a certain king prayed to be blessed with a daughter and in answer the gods sent him a golden parrot, which soon after perched on an anti-hill and disappeared into it. The disappointed king got the ant hill excavated and was rewarded for his pains by finding his daughter with divine beauty. She came to be worshipped as the Matangi.[28]

In connection with the Basavi system, it is recorded in the *Madras Law Report, 1892* that among the Madigas there is a widespread custom of performing in the temple of Yellamma a marriage ceremony where the girl is married without possibility of widowhood or divorce to the goddess. She is at liberty to have intercourse with men at pleasure. Her children are heirs to her father and keep up his family. The *basavi's* nieces being made *basavi* and become her heirs. The *Basavi* seems in some cases to become prostitutes. In fact, they acquire the right of intercourse with men of their caste.[29]

The ceremony of initiation into Matangihood is fully described by Emma Rosenbuch and recorded by Edgar Thurston in 1890s.

In the Karnataka a Vakkaliga Priest performs country at Tumkur in Mysore the ceremony of initiation. A portion of the front courtyard at the house is cleaned and smeared with Cow-dung. On the space thus prepared a Kolam (*muggu*) of Lotus is drawn with red, yellow and white powders. The outline is first drawn with rice or *ragi* (Elusive Coracana)

flour deftly dropped from between the thumb and index finger. The inter spaces are then filled in with turmeric and *Kunkuma* powder. Five small pots are arranged one in the centre and one at each corner of Kolam. By the side of the pots are placed a bell of sacred ashes, a new cloth, a piece of turmeric, camphor and plantain fruits. Plantain stems are set up at the corners of the Kolam. A string is passed seven times round the four corner pots and tied to the central pot. The women who are about to become a Matangi should live on fruits and milk for five days previous to the ceremony. She is dressed in a white saree and seats herself on the *muggu* close to the central pot. A Bamboo basket, containing a pot bearing the device of two-foot prints (of Ellamma), an earthen or wooden receptacle, an iron lamp, and a cane, is placed on her head.

The Asadi Madiga sing songs about Ellamma, and the Vakkaliga priest throws rice over the novice's head, feet, knees and shoulders, and ties two bottus (marriage badges), called respectively Ellamma's and Parasurama's *bottu* on her neck. The new and old Matangis bawl out *ekkalde jogavva*. The ceremony closes with drinking of toddy by the Matangis and Asadis. The basket *(adlige)* containing various articles enumerated the badge of a Mattangi who carries it with its contents, and few leafy twigs of the margosa tree (*Melia Azadirachta).* The basket is wrapped in red or brown cloth and may not be placed on the ground. At Matangi's house, it is hung up by means of a rope or

placed in a niche in the wall. It may be noted that the Madigas call the intoxicant toddy *palu* (milk).[30]

Matangi is prohibited from marrying. When a Matangi dies her successor is chosen in the following manner. All the Cindu Madiga girls of the village, between the ages of eight and ten, who have not attained puberty, are assembled before the shrine, and invoking hymns are chanted amid a flourish of trumpets, drums, and other accessories. The girl who becomes possessed (on whose the goddess descends) is the chosen vessel and she is invested with the insignia of her office, a round sieve, a bunch of Margosa (*Melia Azadirachta)* leaves a snake-headed bamboo stick, a piece of cotton thread rope with some cowries (Cypreamoneta shells) strung on it, and a small vessel of *Kunkuma* (coloured aniline powder).[31] A vow of life long celibacy is also administrated to her. At time of worship, she dances about in wild freezy, and she is given toddy to drink, which she frequently spits on her devotees who regard this as auspecious. As early as 1906, an eyewitness record of the Matangi *kolupu* is reported in the *Madras Christian College Magazine* written by A. Madhavaiah. He witnessed this performance in the village of Tudimilla, Cumbum Taluq, Kurnool District. In this village between two hillocks, known as Surabeswara Kona, three shrines belonging to Saptamatas, Jamadagni - Renuka Devi and Matangi are found. The Matangi *Kolupu* is performed even till date in this place. The performer of Matangi vesam is a Madiga

women, about 30 years age, and, but for the insignia of her office, not in any way differing from the rest of her caste women. Though unmarried, she had several children, but this was apparently no disqualitification. Before the shrine of seven mothers the drummer invoked the Goddess by chanting a Telugu hymn, keeping time on his drum. The meaning of the hymn was to this effect;

"Sathya Surabesha Kona! Gowthama's Kamadhenu! The headless trunk is Sathya surabesha Kona! Your father Giri Raju Kamadeva Jamadhagni mahamuni beheaded the trunk; silently Jamadhagni cut off the arms; did you, the headless trunk in Kamadhenu vanam, the headless trunk of Jamadhagni, your fathers golden sword, did you ask to be born a virgin in the snake pit?"[32]

"While chanting tne above, the drummer was dancing round and round the women, and beating wildly on his drum. The women began to tremble all over, and soon it was visible that the goddess had descended on her. Then the drummer, wilder and more frantic than ever, began to praise the goddess in these words:-

"Are you wearing bells to your ankles, 0 mother? Are you wearing cowries, 0 mother? Dancing and singing, 0 mother! We pray to thee, O mother! Possessed and falling on the ground, I implore thee, O mother! 0 mother, 0 mother, who went to Delhi and Oruganti with a sieve in the right-hand, with a wand in the left; with bells tinkling at her ankles; the mother went to Oruganti town, the mother went away".

During this chant, the women views with the drummer, and dances fiercely round and round, always facing him. Then comes the appearing chant, which the drummer drawls out in a quivering and solemn tone, and without dancing about—

"By the feet of the thirty-three crores, by the feet of the sixty crores, by the feet of Devaas, peace!"

The Matangi then stands with closed eyes, panting for breath, and quite exhausted.

On ordinary days, the Matangi goes about the village, collecting the offerings of her devotees, and, we take it, she is never in much want. There are also local Matangi's in other villages, but they are all said to be subordinate to the Tudimilla woman, who is the high pontiff of the institution.[33]

Among the Madigas of Tumkur in Mysore, the Matangis must apparently belong to one of two septs, *belliyoru* or *malloru*.[34]

The Madiga Asadis, who are males, have to go through an initiation ceremony very similar to that of the Matangi. But a neckles of pebbles is substituted for the *bottu,* and the non-brahmin priest touches the novice's shoulders with flowers, turmeric powder, and Kunkum. The Asadis are musicians who sing songs or recite stories about Ellamma. They play on a musical instrument called Chaudike, or *Jamidika* that is combination of a drum and string instrument. The Matangis and Asadis, both being dedicated to Eliamma, are eminently qualified to

remove pollution for many castes who are considered as *Ellamma Vokkalu* or followers of Ellamma. A lotus device, or figures of Potu-Raju and Matangi, is drawn on the ground, after it has been cleansed with cow-dung. The Matangi, with her insignia, sits in the centre of the device, and the Asadis, sitting close by, sing the praises of Ellamma to the accompainment of the jamidika. The Matangi and Asadi then drink toddy, and go about the house, where in the former sprinkle toddy with the *margasa twig.* Some times they pour some of the toddy into their mouths, and spit it out all over the house. The pot, in which the toddy is placed, is, in some places, called *Pallaki* (Palanquin).[35]

The Asadis version of the story of Ellamma is as follows. She is the goddess for all, and is present in the tongues of all except dumb people, because they have to pronounce the sylable *elli* in Kannada (where) whenever they ask a question containing the word where. She is a mysterious being, who often exhibits herself in the form of light or flames. She is the cause of universe, and the one sakthi in existence thereon. She is supposed to be the daughter of Giriraja Muni and Javanikadevi, and the wife of Jamadhagni Rishi. Her son is Prasurama. The town where she lives has three names, Jambupuri, Isampuri, and Vijayanagara. It has eighty-seven gates, and fortified by seven walls. She is believed to have for her dress all kinds of snakes. Several groves of margosa trees are said to flourish in her vicinity. She is worshipped under many names and has become Lakshmi,

Gouramma, and Saraswathi in Brahman houses, or Akkumari in Vakkaliga houses. To the Idigas she is Gatabaghya Lakshmi, to the Kurubas Ganga Mari, to the Oddes Peddamma and Chinnamma, and so on.[36] She is said to have proceeded on a certain day to the town of Orugallu, accompanied by Jana Matangi. On the way the soles of Matangi's feet blistered, and she sat down with Yellamma beneath a margosa tree. After resting a short time Matangi asked Ellamma's permission to go to neighbouring Idiga (Teleugu toddy-drawer), and get some toddy to drink. Ellamma objected, as the Idiga Gauda was a Lingayath, and Matangi would be compelled to wear the Lingam. When Matangi persisted, Ellamma transformed herself into an anthill and Matangi, in the guise of a young woman, went to the Idiga Gowda with her cane (*Jogi Kolu*) and basket, and asked for toddy. The Gouda became angry, and, tying her to a datepalm (phamix sylvestris), beat her, and gave her cane and basket to his groom. Matangi was further ill treated by the Gouda and his wives, but escaped, and went to the Gouda's brother, who treated her kindly, and offered her toddy, of which he had sixty loads on bullocks. All this he poured into the shell of Margosa fruit, which Matangi held in her hand, and yet it was not filled. Eventually the toddy extracted from a few palms was brought, and shell became full. So pleased was Matangi with the Idigas treatment of her, that she blessed him, and instructed him to leave three date palms untapped as *Basavi* trees in every grove. She

then returned to Ellamma, and it was resolved to afflict the Gouda who has treated her badly with all kinds of diseases. Still disguised as a young woman, she went to him with sweet smelling powders, which he purchased for a large sum of money. But, when he used them, he became afflicted with manifold diseases, including small pox, measles, cancer, asthama, gout, rheumatism, abscesses, and bedsores. Matangi then appeared before him as an old fortuneteller woman, whom the Idiga consulted, and doing as she told him, was cured. Subsequently, learning that all his misfortunes **were due to** his want **of** respect to Matangi, he became one of *Ellamma's Vokkalu*.[37]

This version of Asadis relates Matangi to Gouda caste and therefore even today the Goudas participate in the ritual of Matangi and offer her vowes.

The Madiga Basavis are given alms, and join in the procession. A quantity of rice and ragi flour is poured into basket, over which one of the village servants cuts the throat of a small black ram. The carcase is laid on the bloody flour, and the whole covered with old cloths, and placed on the head of a Madiga, who stands for sometime in front of the goddess. The Goddess is then carried a few yards, while the Madiga walking in front. A hole is dug close to her, and basket of bloody flour and the ram's carcase are buried. After some dancing by the Madiga Basavis to the music beat of drums, the Madigas bring five new pots, and worship them. A buffalo, devoted to the goddess after

the previous festival, is then driven or dragged through the village with shouting and drum beating, walked round the temple, and beheaded by the Madiga in front of the goddess. The head is placed in front of her with the right foreleg in the mouth, and a lamp, lightened eight days previously, is placed on its top. All then start in procession round the village, a Madiga, naked but for a few margosa (Melia Azadirachta) leaves, and held by two others, leading the way. Behind him are all the other Madigas, carrying six hundred seers of cholum (sorghum millet), which they scatter; and, following them, all the other villagers. It is daybreak, and the Madiga who lead the way, the *pujari* (priest), and the woman who followed him, who have been fasting for more than twenty-four hours then eat. The Madiga is fed. This Madiga is said to be in mortal terror while leading the procession, for the spirit or influence of the goddess comes over him. He swoons before the procession is completed. At noon the people collect again at village goddess temple, where another buffalo is sacrificed. The head is placed in front of the Goddess as before, and removed at once for food. Then those of the Madigas who are under vows, come dressed in margosa leaves, with lamps on their heads, and sacrifice buffalos, sheep and goats to the goddess.[38]

A further account of the festival of the village Goddess Udisalamma, at Bandri in the Bellary district, is given by Mr.Fawcett "A Madiga", he writes, "naked but for a few leaves round his waist, leads the

procession, and, following him, are Madigas with baskets. Fear of the Goddess comes on the Madiga. He swoons, and is carried, to the temple, and flung on the ground in front of the Goddess. After a while he is revived, bathed, and given new clothing. This man is one of a family, in which this curious office is hereditary. He must be the son of a married woman, not of a Basavi, and he must not be married. He fasts from the beginning of the festival till he has done what is required of him. A young ram-the sacrifice sheep is taken up by one of the Poturajus, and if it were a child, its hind legs at either side of his waist and its fore legs over his shoulders, and he bites its throat open and shows his bloody mouth to the people. He throws it down and Madigas remove it. He is known as *bhoota poligadu* among the locals.[39] The account of Bishop white head on the ritual at Masulipatnam is as follows.

On the last day, a male buffalo, called *Devara Potu* (he who is devoted to the goddess), is brought before the image, and its head cut off by the head Madiga of the town. The blood is caught in a vessel, and sprinkled over some boiled rice, and then the head, with the right foreleg in the mouth, is placed before the shrine on a flat wicker basket, with the rice and blood on another basket just below it. A lighted lamp is placed on the head, and then another Madiga carries it on his own head round the village, with a new cloth dipped in the blood of the victim tied round its neck. This is regarded here and elsewhere

as a very inauspicious **and** dangerous office, and **the headman** village has to offer **considerable** inducements to **persuade a** Madiga to undertake it. Ropes are tied round his body and arms, **and** held fast by men walking behind him, to prevent his being carried off by evil spirits, and limes are cut in half and thrown into the air, so that the demons may catch at them instead of at the man. It is believed that gigantic demons sit on the top of tall trees ready to swoop down and carry him away, in order to get the rice and the buffalo's head. The idea of carrying the head and rice round a village, so the people said, is to draw a kind of cordon on every side of it, and prevent the entrance of the evil spirits. Should any one in the town refuse to subscribe for the festival, his house is omitted from the procession, and left to the tender mercies of the devils. This procession is called Bali-haranam, and for performing it, in the Kistna district, *inams* (lands rent free) are held by certain families of Madigas. Besides the buffalo, large number of sheep and goats, and fowls are sacrificed, each householder giving at least one animal. The head Madiga, who kills the animals, takes the carcase, and distributes the flesh among the members of his family.[40]

In some localities, during epidemics like smallpox or cholera, the Madigas celebrate a festival in honour of Mariamma, for the expenses of which a general subscription is raised, to which all castes contribute. A booth is erected in a grove, or beneath a margosa or *Strychnos Nux-Vomica* tree, within which a decorated pot (*Karagam*) is placed on a

platform. The pot is usually filled with water, and its mouth closed by a coconut. Infront of the pot a screen is setup, and covered with a white cloth, on which rice, plantains, and cakes are placed, with a mass of flour, in which a cavity is scooped out to hold a lighted wick fed with Ghee (clarified butter), or gingerly oil. A Goat is sacrificed, and its head, with a flour light on it, placed close to the pot. The food, which has been offered to the goddess, is distributed. On the last day of the festival, the pot is carried in procession through the village, and goats are sacrificed at the four-cardinary points of the compass. The pot is deposited at a spot where three roads meet, and a goat, pumpkins, limes, flowers, etc. are offered to it. Everything, except the pot, is left on the spot.[41]

Thus the Madigas rituals are instrinscicly connected with Matangi or Yellamma and officiating priests inevitably the "bards" of the Madigas, namely Asadis, Cindus, Nulakachandayyas etc..

All the above-mentioned rituals are very crucial to the Madiga Community. It is believed that if they don't perform these rights, the gods would curse them and bring disease and death. According to the Cindu Madiga's *Jambapuranam*, the goddess blesses them if only they listen to the caste myth performed by the Cindus, and oblige to conduct rituals to their goddess through the Cindu Madigas.[42]

The Jambapuranam gives the following account, which testify how the cindus acquired ritual right to perform the caste myth.

"When *Kamadhenu* (the sacred cow) committed suicide infront of hermitage of Siva the devatas tried to remove the carcases but failed to do so. They directed Chennaiah the magical off-spring of Parvathy, to go and call *Jambava muni* inorder to get an advise on the removal of carcases. *Jambava muni* before descending from the heavens gave sacred gifts *(birudulu)* to the Cindu Jihva Maha Muni, who is the son of second wife, Jagdviinuta Mata, and directed him to wear them. He has given rest of his properties to the children of first wife, Jagathveera mata. Chinnaiah took *Jambavamuni* to the devatas. By chanting *govinda,* he removed the carcases from the *vicinity* of Shiva's *hermitage.* Then the devathas told *Jihvamahamuni* to cook the sacred cow, so that they can eat after they come from ritual bathing. They instructed that the dish should not be polluted. *Jambavamuni* kept Chennaiah to over see the cooking; while cooking, a piece of meat fell on the ground. Chennaiah through blowing air from his mouth cleaned the meat and put it back into the vessel. The dish got polluted. When *devatas* came back they saw the entire dish got spoiled and stinking due to pollution. They became angry. *Jambavamuni* came to know this, and cursed Chennaiah, who polluted the dish, to remain as *Mala.* The route word *Mala* comes from *Myla* (Pollution). Then *Jambavamuni* told the devathas that he came on their request to the earth to remove carcases. In any case he cannot leave the earth before down, and if he stay back he has no other go but to serve human beings (narulu)

who are going to take birth in *Kaliyuga*, which is commencing from the next day's sunrise. Therefore he asked *devatas* to give him a blessing. He asked that his posterity should be given various kinds of grain and liquor for their sustance. He also asked them to give a share from the crops produced.[43]

Thus the patron client relationships, according to myth emerged as economic compulsions between the Madiga and the village. However, the myth also gives ritual compulsions as a reason between Madigas and Cindu Madigas to bind in patron and client relationship.

It is not only the patron and client relationship system, in terms of exchange of resources and services between Madigas and Cindu Madigas is authenticated in this caste myth, but also mutual dependency enumerated in it. How the Cindu Madigas acquired their right to perform the myth to the Madigas is also legalized by way of creating sibling relationships. Which exists between the two communities through their caste myth. According to the myth, the Madigas are the children of *Jagathveera Mata,* the first wife of *Jambava muni,* and *Jagathvenuth mata* the second wife of *Jambavamuni*, begot Cindu Jihvamahamuni. From his leanage the Cindu Madigas are born.[44] As per the myth, following narrative reveals, how the Cindu Madigas became bards of Madigas. Jamadhagni finding faults with his wife Renuka, asks the son to kill his mother. Renukadevi ran heltor and skeltor hid in the toddy bag made

up of leather, and prayed *Jambavamuni* not to reveal her existance. However, Parasurama finds her hiding place and kills her. Renuka became furious and *malevolent.* She went after the people to kill them; then *Jambavamuni,* in order to passify her, requests the first wifes sons, namely Chapala Mahamuni and *Raudra* Mahamuni, to go and quench her fury. They expressed their inability to do so. /Then *Jambavamuni* called *Daccalivadu,* the magical son of *Jambavamuni,* who was killed by him to make marriage Parapherineliva to the wedding occasion of the *thrimurthies.* He expressed his inability stating that he became an outcaste by marrying a girl born of cow's feet *(decca). Jambavamuni* then requested Cindu *Jivhamahamuni*, son of second wife, then he agreed on the condition that he should be given all the thirty two gifts (birudulu or titles), which were given to *Jambavamuni* by gods, while passfying the Adishakthi. Then *Jambavamuni* gave his all thirty-two gifts to Cindu Jivahamahamuni who by wearing them guised himself as Gosangi, passified Renuka Yellamma through a spectacle performance.[45]

Yellamma became normal and gave him seven gifts and blessed him by stating that, his postirity will have the right to perform *Yellamma vesam*, for which the children of first wife will reciprocate them by offering shares. Then the Parabramha and the gods also blessed him that wherever the children of *Jambavamuni* are residing, they can go to them and give performances of the caste myth. Inturn, the children of

Jambavamuni(Madigas) will give them offerings. The gods also stated that wife of Cindu Jivuha mahamuni should have exclusive right to perform Yellamma vesam and should be bestowed with offerings.[46]

Thus the Cindus acquired the profession. Since then they are performing the Cindu Bhagavatam. The Cindu Madigas also adapted other performances, popularly known as Yakshaganams or Bhagavatams. The Cindu Yakshaganams are folk theatrical performances, wherein the steps (Cindus) are unique in the form of dance steps. The epic stories from Ramayana, Mahabharatha, Bhagavatams are taken for performances. The whole narrative is semi-dance sequence based. Performers ranging from 10 to 25 depending upon the nature of the text, take up roles with exuberent make-up, costume and ornaments and perform the narrative in Yakshagana or Bhagavatha style. The narrative is considered as sacred, since they refer to songs of *Yakshas* (Songs of gods) are stories of gods *(Bhagavatams).* The text is played out in theatrical form with all musical and vocal accompanists. Since Cindu Madigas deployed their own style of narration, of course following broadly the Yakshaganam or Veedhi Bhagavatam tradition which is widely prevalent in the whole of South Indian soils, they became more popular among the non-Madiga communities because of their Bagavathams which is played for the sake of entire village.

REFRENCES

1. According to one view people from Madiga community have taken to dancing as profession and they are called as Cindu Madigas; Cindu means a dance step. The other view is that the word Cindu is derived from the word Sindu that means Ocean. The Cindu dancers and their movements look like the waves of the Ocean. Kota Shymala Kama Sastry, *Sri Andhra Vachaspathyamu* (Tel,) - Vol-IV, Kakinada, K.S.K.Sastri and Sons, 1940. P.265.
2. Refers to *Chaturvarna* system which is prevalent from ancient times in India. The *varna* denotes the ritual rank in which different *Jatis* (castes) or groups are placed at different levels.
3. Because of the untouchable concept, as per *varna* system the mala and Madiga community were forced to live outside main village habitational site. It is observed during the field visits that this practice is still in force even today.
4. Edgar Thurston, K.Rangachari, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1909, rpt. 1987 Vol. IV. PP.292 - 294.
5. Edgar Thurston, *Ibid* ., Vol.IV. PP:308-309.
6. B.Venkateswarulu *et.all, Jamabapuranam*.(Tel.). Hyderabad. Janapada Kala Parishodhana Vedika, 1997 PP.3-5; Oral interview with Cindula Bala Narasaiah age 45, and Cindula Shyam age 43 years at Aleru, Armoor.

7. B.Venkateswarulu, *Op. Cit* .,PP.10-11

8. B.Venkateswarulu, *ibid,* PP.13-14

9. Oral evidence collected from Cindula Ramaswamy 70 years at Appireddy Pelli, Janagam, Warangal District, on 03.04.99.

10. Edgar Thurston *Op-Cit.,* Vol.IV, PP.309-311.

11. *Ibid* - PP: 314 to 316

12. Ibid

13. *Ibid* - PP - 300 to 303

14. Ibid

15. Y.Yadagiri Sharma, Janapada Bhikshuka Gayakulu (Tel.) Hyderabad unpublished Ph.D., thesis submitted to Osmania University, Telugu Department 1986. P.558.

16. W.H. Whiser, *The Hindu Jajamani System,* Lucknow. 1936; M.N.Srinivas and A.K.Sha, "The myth of the self sufficiency the Indian Village" *Economic Weekly,* No. 12, 1960.

17. Ibid,.

18. *Ibid,*

19. *Ibid.,*

20. Edgar Thurston, *Op-Cit.,pp. 317-320.*

21. Ibid.,

22. Ibid.,

23. Witnessed ritual process at Hyderabad on 20.04.1999. This phenomenon is observed not only during performance in

Yellamma Vesam but also during the celebrations of Mahankali Puja and Durgastami at the time of Dussera festival.

24. Witnessed rituals on Mahankali *Jatara* on 13.08.1999 at Secunderabad Mahankali Temple.

25. Ibid.,

26. Witnessed ritual process at Yellamma Temple at Saundathi, Dharwada, Karnataka State on 24.05.1998

27. Edgar Thurston - *Op-Cit.* P.297

28. Ibid., P.298

29. Ibid., P.303

30. Ibid., PP. 311-313

31. Ibid,.

32. A. Madhavaiah, *Madras Christian College Magazine, XXIII,* (New Series, V), 1906.

33. Ibid,.

34. Edgar Thurston, *Op-Cit.* PP:298 -99

35. It is observed in the field during field visit at Appireddy Palli. Warangal District on 3-4-99; However, this ritual practice differs from district to district since such elaboration is not observed in the same performance at Saigudem, Nalgonda District on:08.04.98.

36. Edgar Thruston, *Op-Cit.* P. 299

37. Ibid.,P.307

38. Ibid ,, P.312

39. Ibid ,. PP.310-311

40. Ibid,.

41. Ibid.,

42. B.Venkateswarulu (Tel.) et.al., *Jambapuranam Op-Cit*.. P.18

43. Ibid ., P.15

44. Ibid., P.14

45. Ibid., P.19

46. ibid.,